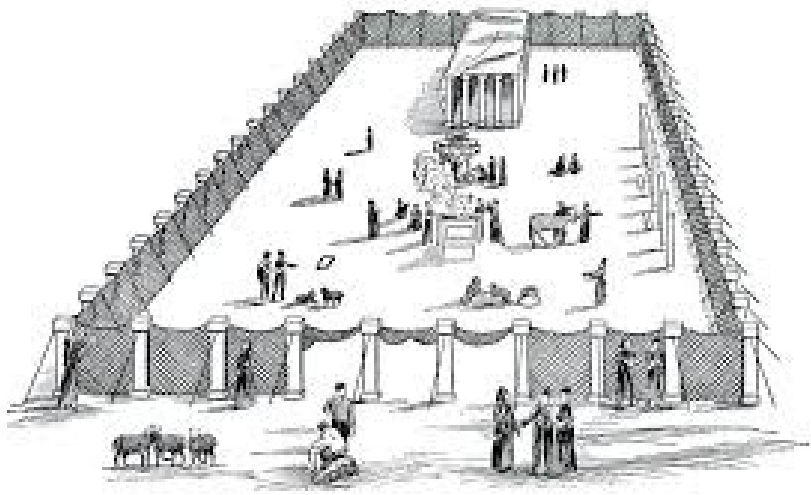
The Old Testament *Sanctuary* And its Services According to Scripture

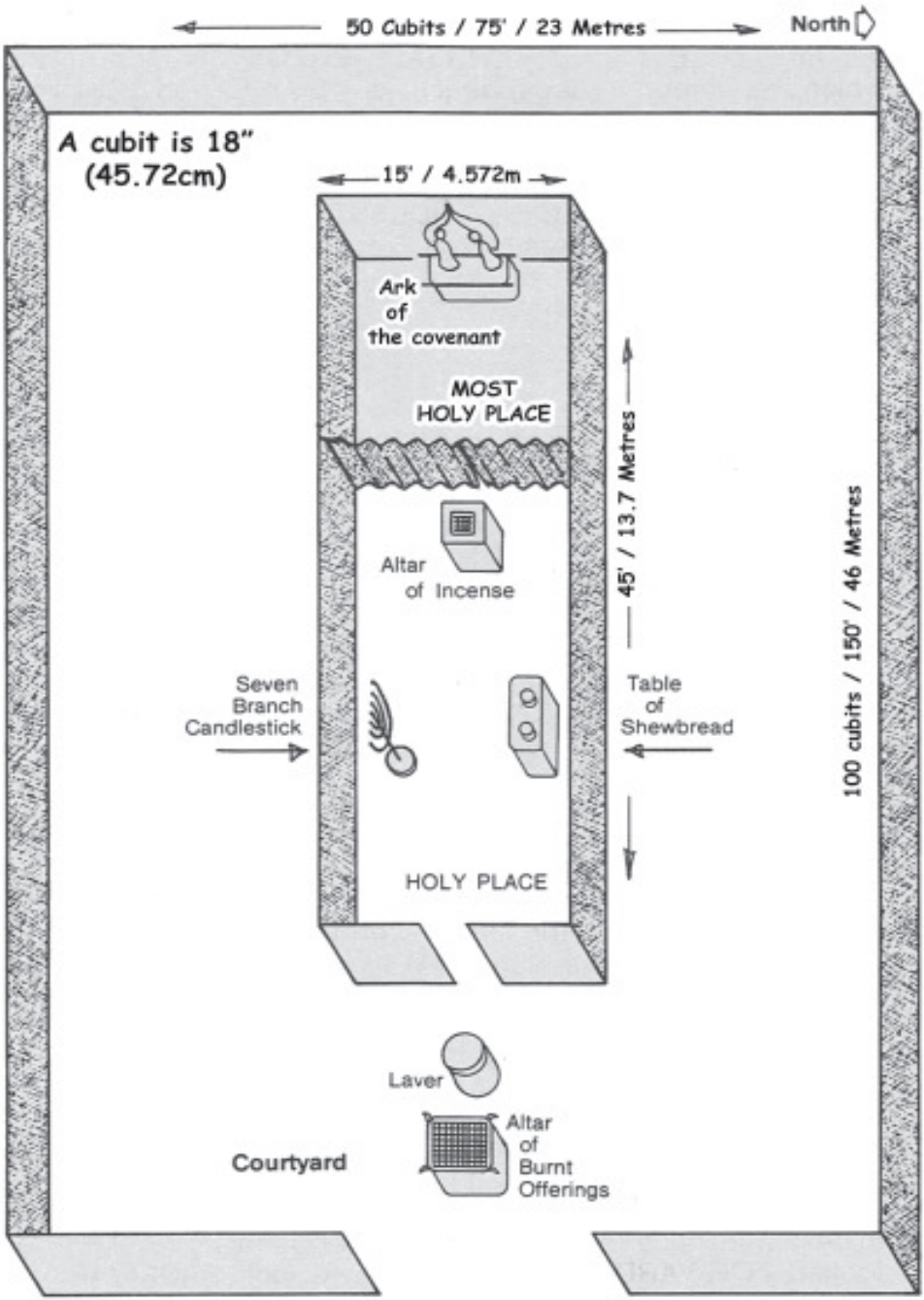


In the Footsteps of John:

Walking through the Book of Revelation with John the Revelator

www.lrhartley.com/john

1. A drawing of the sanctuary and courtyard appears below (This graphic is based on the description found in Exodus chapters 25-40).



2. The sanctuary consisted of three main parts: The *Courtyard* (Exodus 27:9-13), The *Holy Place* and the *Most Holy Place* (Exodus 26:33).

3. In the courtyard were the *Altar of Burnt Offerings* (Exodus 27:1-8); the *laver* for washing (Exodus 30:18-21); and the sanctuary structure itself. The courtyard fence was made of white linen supported by 60 pillars (Exodus 27:9).

4. Inside the Holy Place were three pieces of furniture:

a. The *Table of Shewbread* (Exodus 25:23-30) which represented dependence on God for physical and spiritual food. It pointed to Jesus the living bread (l Corinthians 11:23, 24; John 6:51).

b. The *Seven Branch Candlestick or Menorah* (Exodus 25:31-40). The *lights* represent the Word of God (Psalm 119:105) and Jesus Christ (John 9:5); and the *oil* represents the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:1-6; Revelation 4:5).

c. The *Altar of Incense* (Exodus 30:1-9). *Incense* represents the prayers of God's people (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 5:8; 8:3, 4).

5. In the Most Holy Place there was one piece of furniture only, the *Ark of the Covenant* (Exodus 25:10-22). It was a chest overlaid with gold. The cover was called the *Mercy Seat* (Exodus 25:17-22). On it were carved angels of gold. Here, between the angels, dwelt the presence of God. Inside the ark were the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone (Deuteronomy 10:4, 5). The Ark demonstrated both mercy and law. The law must be kept but God provides mercy for His people who break it.

6. When a person sinned he brought a sacrificial animal to the priest. He confessed his sins over the head of the animal then slew it with his own hands. Sin was thus transferred from the <u>sinner</u> to the animal <u>substitute</u>. The priest sprinkled some of the blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offerings and a portion of its flesh was eaten by the priest (See Leviticus 6:25-30).

With the sin offering (for the congregation as a whole), blood was sprinkled on the veil by the priest and put on the horns of the altar of incense. Sin was thus transferred from the animal <u>substitute</u> to the <u>sanctuary</u>. This demonstrates how Jesus becomes my substitute before the Father when I accept His blood in my behalf.

There was no intrinsic virtue in the blood of a lamb to atone for sin.
Faith in Jesus' sacrifice to come was the key (1 John 1:7).
They looked *forward* to the cross just as we look *backward* to it

Christ is represented by the *lamb* that *dies* as my substitute (John 1:29) and also by the *priest* who *lives* as my High Priest in heaven. Both symbols are necessary to represent Jesus' ministry. His sacrifice paid for my sins; His present ministry restores me to His image. Both are essential. Neither is sufficient alone.

7. In addition to the daily services, once each year the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to 'cleanse' the sanctuary (Leviticus 16:29-34; Hebrews 9:7). The sins of the people were transferred all year long, by their sacrifices, to the sanctuary. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) two goats were chosen, one as the scapegoat and the other as the Lord's goat. The Lord's goat was slain and its blood taken into the Most Holy Place, accomplishing the work of cleansing. Then the priest put the sins on the scapegoat, who was led into he wilderness to escape and die (Leviticus chapter 16 and 23:27-30).

The Lord's goat represents Jesus, who is our atonement, substitute and example. The scapegoat, who represented Satan, was separated from God's people forever. In like manner, after being arraigned in judgment at the close of the thousand years, Satan, his angels, and sin will be destroyed and thus banished forever from the universe.

The Day of Atonement was a day of judgment. If sins were confessed prior to that day the people were saved. If not, they were cut off from among God's people. Their doom was sealed (Leviticus 23:27-30). It was a day of heartfelt confession, repentance and earnest prayer.

The Jews have always considered the Day of Atonement or 'Yom Kippur' a solemn day of judgment. From the Jewish Encyclopædia we read*:*
"God, seated on His throne to judge the world . . . openeth the Book of Records; it is read, every man's signature being found therein. The great trumpet is sounded; a still, small voice is heard; the angels shudder, saying, this is the day of judgment . . . On New Year's Day the decree is written; on the Day of Atonement it is sealed who shall live and who are to die"
(Article, Atonement, day of…).

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